



## Simulation programs train soldiers for Iraq

**MEGAN SHANNON**  
Staff Writer

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Sophisticated military training equipment designed to save soldiers' lives — some of which has never been used before — was on display in Central Florida Research Park.

The presentation was in preparation for last week's Capitol Hill Day, where members of Congress learned about new equipment now available in the war on terror.

Troy Lay, a former U.S. Army counterintelligence agent, routinely spoke to the Iraqi Army, Iraqi informants and even Iraqi children while he was deployed, getting the information he needed.

In preparation for his deployment, he and his fellow soldiers were trained to use interpreters by role-playing. When he actually had the three-way exchange, he was not prepared.

"Using an interpreter lengthens the conversation and that makes a big difference when you're in combat," he said.

The U.S. Army's Program Executive Office Simulation Training Instrumentation (PEO STRI) introduced the Human Intelligence Control Cell (HICC), which prepares soldiers for conversations through interpreters.

A large screen lets the soldier interact with people speaking in a foreign language's dialect and using mannerisms specific to that culture.

More than a dozen other systems used to train soldiers were also on display during the Capitol Hill Dry Run.

PEO STRI has been producing, acquiring and developing military training devices for 55 years. It functions as a common training division for each military branch, allowing them to more efficiently work together.

The HICC will be fielded in several military bases throughout the country, and is the first training system for language interpretation.

Lay retired from the Army two years ago. Since then he has become a technological instrument trainer for PEO STRI, helping design the HICC through his own personal experience.

He said the system allows soldiers to get used to Iraqi mannerisms and hand gestures not used in the U.S.

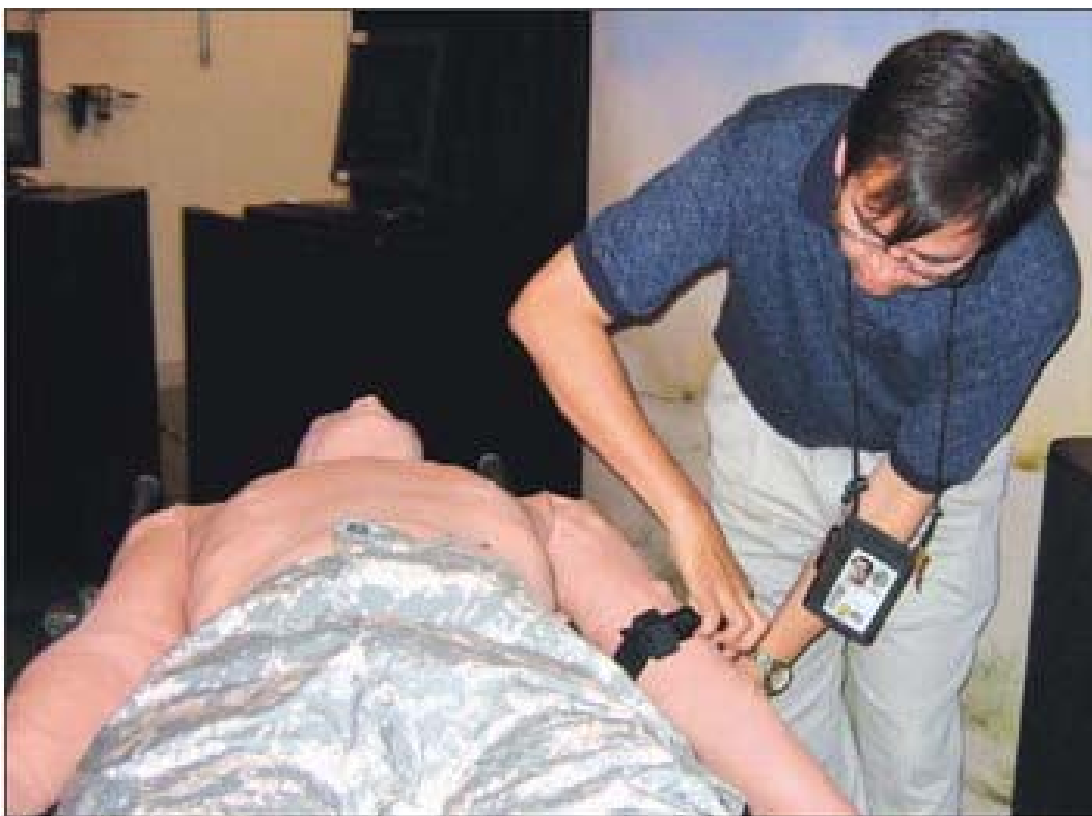


PHOTO BY MEGAN SHANNON

**Jack Norflect, lead science and technology manager for U.S. Army Medical Simulation, demonstrates using a tourniquet on a simulated patient. Simulated patients can breathe, blink, bleed, swell, burn and die.**

“For instance, when they greet you they put their hand over the heart and bow,” he said as he mimicked the gesture. “This system will show them what to expect. It has many other languages available too.”

Another first on display was a physiologically- based patient simulator, which looks, acts and feels like a real human body. Similar systems have been around for years but this is the first that can be used outside the classroom.

“There has been great success in the classroom but they could never use it in the field. Soldiers in the field would practice on each other,” said Jack Norflect, lead science and technology manager for U.S. Army Medical Simulation.

The simulated patient can breathe, blink, bleed, swell, burn and die. Norflect said the three most preventable causes of death on the battlefield are bleeding, blocked airways and collapsed lungs. The patient simulator allows soldiers to practice treating all these and just about any other wound or ailment.

Sometimes tweaking training equipment can be as easy as recording the system. For instance, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are injuring and killing more marines than anything else in combat, according to military analyst George Harrington. Consequently the military has asked for more IED training.

The new system on display tested soldiers in training on checking for IEDs in places like abandoned cars. If they tripped an IED, the system would record it and then show the soldier what they did wrong. Harrington said this is much more effective.

“We are teaching them to be reactive. There’s no time to think when you’re in the field,” he said. “It teaches them to look for things that are out of place.”

This is the 10th year PEO STRI has made the trek to Capitol Hill but it is the first time the dry run was held in Orlando.

“They didn’t know this existed in Central Florida”, said Kristen Dooley, spokeswoman for PEO STRI .

Orlando is the world’s capital for simulation, according to Russ Hauck, executive director of the National Center for Simulation. Multimillion-dollar simulation companies in Orlando take in nearly half of the industry revenue worldwide.

Simulation and the military have always gone hand in hand in Research Park. Companies started setting up shop there in the 1980s to accommodate the military research being conducted, Hauck said.



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**Troy Lay, a former U. S. Army counterintelligence agent, said soldiers have a great need to be trained for conversing with interpreters. The system includes state-of-the-art elements such as accents and mannerisms native to the countries where they are deployed.**

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